

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

April 3, 2020

The Honorable Steven T. Mnuchin
Secretary of the Treasury
U.S. Department of Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20220

The Honorable Charles P. Rettig
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
1111 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20224

The Honorable Robert Wilkie
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

The Honorable Andrew Saul
Commissioner
Social Security Administration
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235

Dear Secretary Mnuchin, Commissioner Rettig, Secretary Wilkie and Commissioner Saul:

The COVID-19 public health emergency is taking a massive economic toll on families across the country. To provide immediate financial assistance to struggling individuals during the crisis, Congress passed and the President signed the bipartisan Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) – Act. This legislation directly provides most Americans with stimulus payments to help cover necessary personal expenses as the crisis continues.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will automatically send stimulus payments to eligible taxpayers who filed a 2018 or 2019 tax return. However, many Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries, veterans who receive pensions, and Social Security beneficiaries, including retired seniors and individuals who experience disabilities, typically do not file tax returns.

On Monday, March 30, the IRS published guidance indicating that the agency would require recipients of Social Security, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries, and veterans receiving pensions to file 2019 tax returns to receive stimulus payments.

After bipartisan concerns were raised, the IRS announced late Wednesday, April 1, that Social Security beneficiaries will now receive their payments automatically, without needing to file a tax return. While we commend this move, we must ensure that other vulnerable individuals automatically receive their payments without having to file tax returns. SSI beneficiaries and veterans who receive pensions must receive these payments automatically as well, even if these individuals do not file tax returns.

In 2008, 3.5 million Social Security beneficiaries and veterans never received a stimulus payment that they were owed. They were blocked by the nonsensical requirement that they file a tax return, although they owed no taxes. We cannot allow the same thing to happen now. Any delay will bring unnecessary harm.

The filing requirement places a significant burden on low-income families, individuals who experience disabilities, and our veterans. This is an unnecessary burden that will only create more red-tape for accessing these urgently needed benefits.

Given this, we strongly urge you to ensure that economic stimulus payments are automatically sent to vulnerable SSI beneficiaries and veterans who receive pensions without these individuals needing to file a return.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter DeFazio", is positioned above a horizontal line.

Peter A. DeFazio

Member of Congress

List of Signatories

April 3, 2020

Peter A. DeFazio	Marcy Kaptur	Jim Himes
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